



Portage County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting Minutes

0708

449 South Meridian Street
Ravenna, OH 44266
<http://www.co.portage.oh.us>

Amy Hutchinson, Clerk
330-297-3600

Monday, March 16, 2020

1:00 PM

Commissioners' Board Room

*The Commissioners' meeting minutes are summarized; Audio recordings and backup material are available.
Please contact the Commissioners' Office for specific details.*

The Portage County Board of Commissioners' meeting came to order with the following members present:

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Kathleen Clyde	President	Present
Vicki A. Kline	Vice President	Present
Sabrina Christian-Bennett	Board Member	Present

Also attending throughout the day Jeff Sloan, Keith Korner, Bridget Full, Brian Ames and Record Courier Reporter Diane Smith.

Commissioner Clyde noted this meeting is not the EMA meeting. In today's meeting, the Board will be discussing County policies in light of the public health emergency. Additionally, Directors are not required to be in attendance as the Board will follow up with its departments after the meeting. Director Townend asked if the EMA meeting is still moving forward and Commissioner Clyde explained Director Shackelford will be in touch shortly as he's been notified about the confusion.

Director Kovick presented a draft of the temporary public health emergency leave policy for the coronavirus (COVID-19) after incorporating the Directors' comments for Board review. After a lengthy discussion, the Board agreed to adopt the following language in response to the Coronavirus:

Under the Public Health Emergency Leave Policy:

- *Beginning March 16, 2020 through April 3, 2020 employees who are sick or have a person in their household who is sick with cold or flu-like symptoms will use paid administrative leave and stay home. These employees will receive credit for performing work during this time. Employees should track hours worked on a spreadsheet and attach it to their Leave request, thereby reducing the amount of Leave used. Employees who are not themselves sick are encouraged to do their work at home to the greatest extent possible as determined with their supervisor. Employees who have been exposed to someone who is sick should follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended fourteen (14) day quarantine guidance.*
- *Employees who are ill must stay home. Failure to do so may result in discipline consistent with Portage County personnel policies.*
- *Employees who have young children at home due to school closures are permitted to use sick, vacation, and personal leave to stay home to care for their children. These*

employees are encouraged to work from home to the greatest extent possible as determined with their supervisor and will receive credit for performing work during this time. Employees should track hours worked on a spreadsheet and attach it to their Leave request, thereby reducing the amount of Leave used. Cases where there is not enough paid leave to cover any portion of the employee's absence will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The requirement for a doctor's note is temporarily suspended.

- Employees who have a pre-existing respiratory condition or are otherwise immunocompromised and who are therefore advised to self-isolate are permitted to use sick, vacation, and personal leave to stay home. These employees are encouraged to work from home to the greatest extent possible as determined with their supervisor and will receive credit for performing work during this time. Employees should track hours worked on a spreadsheet and attach it to their Leave request, thereby reducing the amount of Leave used. Cases where there is not enough paid leave to cover any portion of the employee's absence will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The requirement for a doctor's note is temporarily suspended.
- The county intends to use reasonable leave policies as we deal with this public health emergency. The county will review, and revise policies as needed in order to maintain the health and stability of our workforce and our community.
- Employees who used previously scheduled leave time will have it deducted in the manner previously requested in consultation with the employee's supervisor.

The policy is subject to change as circumstances develop.

Director Bragg pointed out when employees are working from home, they do not have the discretion to do work during non-working hours.

TEMPORARY TELEWORK POLICY

Effective: March 16, 2020

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is recommending practicing "social distancing" or avoiding contact with others during the current public health emergency. The Portage County Board of Commissioners is responding to this recommendation by implementing temporary telework arrangements for some employees.

All Elected Officials and Department Heads should:

- *review their essential functions and determine which staff must work on-site and which are eligible to telework based on these functions. Essential functions are the functions that must be maintained in order to ensure continuation of necessary services to the public;*
- *work with the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department to provide resources to employees who are deemed eligible to work off-site using a County owned device (laptop or tablet). Those employees would communicate with ITS to gain access to the VPN connection; and*

- *work with employees and the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department to assist employees who are deemed eligible to work off-site using their own personal devices.*

Essential on-site personnel are expected to report to work as scheduled unless otherwise notified. Some employees may have the capability to work from home provided they have the resources and a County owned device (laptop or tablet) or a personal device that allows them to access necessary tools.

Those approved to work from home temporarily shall check their email and work on tasks during the regular work hours.

Employees who are not exempt from the Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA) overtime provisions, should not work outside their working hours or more than their weekly scheduled work hours. Application of the no overtime provisions shall not apply to Departments delivering essential services.

These arrangements are expected to be short term, and Portage County will continue to monitor guidance from health officials and the need for telework arrangements. Employees should not assume any specified period of time for telework, and Portage County may require employees to return to regular, in-office work at any time.

Director Bragg requested specific direction from the Board as to whether the payment window in his department could be closed. Commissioner Clyde explained these policies are a lot for departments to implement and now that Director Bragg has guidance from the Board about non-essential on-site employees, he should be able to do what he can within his own authority based on these temporary policies changes, but if he would like the Board's approval, he is welcome to come back during the next meeting with a specific list of questions. Director Bragg explained he has 2 employees that don't necessarily need to be in this building being exposed as they can get their work done other ways, however, the phones are the problem. If the Board's not willing to turn off the phones in his department, he needs both employees to be present. Director Bragg indicated he will come back Thursday and will keep his employees on the clock until then. Commissioner Christian-Bennett noted because the department is so small, they all might be essential. Director Kovick mentioned her department's temporary plan is for one of her employees to work 2 days per week and the other is working 2 different days and it could be reduced even further depending on the needs of the office.

Director Kovick explained they have also moved the employment application table in front of the elevators to make it easier for the public to physically turn in application rather than turning applications in at the counter.

Director Bragg stated his employees will stay in order to answer calls and Commissioner Clyde encouraged him to look at other potential ways to utilize temporary telework within his department.

Director Kovick asked if the Board would consider a request from Director Townsend to amend the donation of sick leave policy to help those employees during this time and Commissioner

Clyde is hesitant because this is the type of situation where everyone may need their sick leave. Director Kovick stated the sick leave policy must meet specific criteria and COVID-19 doesn't meet that criteria, but it could be amended. Commissioner Clyde would like to hold off on the suggestion for the time being.

Public Notice from Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Director Shackelford is recommending the Public Notice for COVID-19 be posted on the website and communicated on social media.

Director Bragg asked if the Board is allowing cash payments to be taken on the 7th floor and Commissioner Clyde noted it was up to Director Bragg to decide and if he proposes that, the Board will consider it temporarily as long as the public has other options. Commissioner Christian-Bennett noted there's a drop box outside and the public is able to use it for payments. Commissioner Kline remarked the Board would support the decision if Director Bragg believes his office should no longer take cash payments in person. A web post, posting signs and a news article would be helpful to spread the word. Commissioner Christian-Bennett asked to put some type of attachment on the box for envelopes for people to drop their payments in. Director Bragg suggests the Board suspend the late fees so people could go home and mail their payments and the Board concurred. Director Bragg will come back on Thursday for additional discussion.

The Board would like the EMA announcement to be on a larger piece of paper and Director Bragg stated Tax Map or Director Cooper at the Records Center might be able to print it for them, and Director Kovick will research the issue. Director Bragg will check with Internal Service for some type of apparatus that will hold envelopes for the drop box. Director Bragg will also put envelopes at the counter for payments.

Commissioner Clyde would like to schedule time on Wednesday to discuss any further issues Directors have that they cannot resolve themselves. The Clerk will schedule individual appointments, if necessary.

Director Kovick discussed the staff attendance e-mail Director Shackelford wanted Human Resources to send out to the Elected Officials and Department Heads. On Monday mornings, Human Resources will compile the number of call offs and Commissioner Clyde explained he needs that number for his emergency planning duties and funding. Director Kovick will have staff keep track of all the departments, the number of employees they have, and any call offs and the Board agreed to move forward with the request.

The Board agreed to meet on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 10:00 AM. Commissioner Christian-Bennett noted the Board will need to cancel the Solid Waste Management District Public Hearing and Commissioner Clyde explained Director Steiner is bringing that issue before the Board on Thursday.

Director Kovick will make the requested changes to the emergency leave policy and telework policy for COVID-19 and will forward to all Elected Officials and Department Heads. Commissioner Clyde noted the policies will be effective immediately.

Commissioner Christian-Bennett noted the President might enact the Stafford Act whereby everyone self-quarantines for 14 days and what would the Board do if that happens - has everyone identified essential employees? Director Bragg explained his plan addresses different levels of shut down his department can do, but it's at the Board's pleasure as to what level they operate. All of the Department's functions could be delayed temporarily. Job and Family Services will need to know how to handle the services if the Governor shuts the building down. Commissioner Christian-Bennett suggested moving them to the OMJ Center.

The Board agreed to send the policies to Board of Commissioners Leadership Team for distribution to employees and to the Elected Officials indicating this is the policy the Board adopted today.

JOURNAL ENTRY: The Board of Commissioners approved the Temporary Public Health Emergency Leave Policy for COVID-19 as revised and amended today.

Motion: Commissioner Christian-Bennett

Seconded: Commissioner Kline

All in Favor: Commissioner Christian-Bennett, Yea; Commissioner Kline, Yea; Commissioner Clyde, Yea;

Motion Carries



Department of Human Resources

Board of Commissioners

Kathleen Clyde, President
Vicki A. Kline, Vice President
Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Board Member

**TEMPORARY PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY LEAVE POLICY
FOR COVID-19**

Effective: March 16, 2020

In efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 and ensure support to our staff, families and continuance of essential government services, the Portage County Board of Commissioners hereby enacts a temporary Public Health Emergency Leave policy effective March 16, 2020.

COVID-19, has continued to spread throughout the United States, including the State of Ohio. We want to assure employees that Portage County is planning proactive steps to protect the workplace and our community. It is our goal to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans.

How is it spread?

COVID-19 can easily spread from person to person. The virus is spread between individuals who are in close contact with each other (within about three to six feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also possible for an individual to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

Under the Public Health Emergency Leave Policy:

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- Employees who are ill must stay home. Failure to do so may result in discipline consistent with Portage County personnel policies.



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"An Equal Opportunity Employer"

- Employees who have young children at home due to school closures are permitted to use sick, vacation, and personal leave to stay home to care for their children. These employees are encouraged to work from home to the greatest extent possible as determined with their supervisor and will receive credit for performing work during this time. Employees should track hours worked on a spreadsheet and attach it to their Leave request, thereby reducing the amount of Leave used. Cases where there is not enough paid leave to cover any portion of the employee's absence will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The requirement for a doctor's note is temporarily suspended.
- Employees who have a pre-existing respiratory condition or are otherwise immunocompromised and who are therefore advised to self-isolate are permitted to use sick, vacation, and personal leave to stay home. These employees are encouraged to work from home to the greatest extent possible as determined with their supervisor and will receive credit for performing work during this time. Employees should track hours worked on a spreadsheet and attach it to their Leave request, thereby reducing the amount of Leave used. Cases where there is not enough paid leave to cover any portion of the employee's absence will be reviewed on a case by case basis. The requirement for a doctor's note is temporarily suspended.
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How can I protect myself and my community from COVID-19?

The Centers for Disease Control and Portage County Health District recommend using typical infectious disease precautions, including:

- Staying home if you are ill or a person in your household is ill.
- Staying home as much as possible.
- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (approximately the amount of time needed to sing "Happy Birthday" twice).
- Avoiding touching your mouth, nose, or eyes with unwashed hands.
- Covering sneezes and coughs with a tissue and throwing the tissue in the trash immediately.
- Avoiding contact with those who are sick (known as "social distancing").
- Cleaning and disinfecting all "high touch" objects and surfaces (like doorknobs and phones) daily.

Additional information about COVID-19 is available from the Ohio Department of Health at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH, 7 days a week, 9am – 8pm, and online at <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/home>.

The policy is subject to change as circumstances develop.

JOURNAL ENTRY: The Board of Commissioners approved the Temporary Telework Policy, effective March 16, 2020.

Motion: Commissioner Christian-Bennett

Seconded: Commissioner Kline

All in Favor: Commissioner Christian-Bennett, Yea; Commissioner Kline, Yea; Commissioner Clyde, Yea; **Motion Carries**

Exhibit A.



Department of Human Resources

Board of Commissioners

Kathleen Clyde, President
Vicki A. Kline, Vice President
Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Board Member

TEMPORARY TELEWORK POLICY

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JOURNAL ENTRY: The Board of Commissioners approved the revised Portage County Public Notice for COVID-19.

Motion: Commissioner Christian-Bennett

Seconded: Commissioner Kline

All in Favor: Commissioner Christian-Bennett, Yea; Commissioner Kline, Yea; Commissioner Clyde, Yea;

Motion Carries

Exhibit A.

PORTAGE COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE COVID-19

Health Department - PA

EFFECTIVE: 3/16/2020

All Portage County Offices are open to the public.

In efforts to align with Governor Dewine and the State of Ohio guidance, The Portage County Board of Commissioners requests that the public utilize phone and email as primary ways of communicating with County staff and departments. Additionally, mitigation measures will be in place at Portage County facilities to limit the potential transmission of COVID-19. This is in efforts to ensure the safety of Portage County staff, officials and visitors.

General office phone numbers are attached to this flyer. Feel free to visit the Portage County website and department listing for further information. We thank our residents and visitors for following all safety instructions during this time.

<https://www.co.portage.oh.us>

<https://www.co.portage.oh.us/departments>



Adult Probation (3)297-3450	Municipal Court
Auditor (3)297-3561	Judge Frankhauser (3)297-3632
Board of	Judge Roubic (3)297-4277
Commissioners (3)297-3600	Judge Poland (3)678-6170
Board of Elections (3)297-3511	Clerk of Courts
Budget & Finance (3)298-3034	Auto Title (3)297-3450
Building Dept. (3)297-3530	Collections (3)297-5886
Common Pleas Court	Common Pleas Gen. (3)297-3644
Judge Doherty (3)297-3866	Domestic (3)297-3475
Judge Pittman (3)297-3858	Kent Civil (3)678-9170
Coroner (3)297-3444	Kent Traffic/Crim. (3)678-9100
Detention Center (3)297-5233	Ravenna Civil (3)297-3635
Dog Warden (3)297-6924	Ravenna Traffic/Crim (3)297-3639
Economic Dev. (3)297-3470	Domestic Rel. Court (3)297-5880
Engineer (3)297-6411	Sheriff's Office (3)296-5100
Emergency Mngt (3)297-3607	Recorder (3)297-3553
Human Resources (3)297-3603	Senior Services (3)297-3456
Information Tech (3)297-3584	Solid Waste/ Recycling (3)678-8808
Internal Services (3)297-3611	Treasurer (3)297-3586
Jobs and Family Sv. (3)297-3750	Veterans Resources (3)297-3545
Juvenile Court (3)297-0811	Water Resources (3)297-3685
Juvenile Probate (3)298-2112	
Juvenile Det. Ctr. (3)297-5233	
Probate (3)297-3870	

Motion To: Adjourn the Special Meeting of March 16, 2020 at 2:15 PM

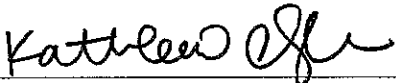
RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVED: Kathleen Clyde

SECONDED: Vicki A. Kline

AYES: Kathleen Clyde, Vicki A. Kline, Sabrina Christian-Bennett

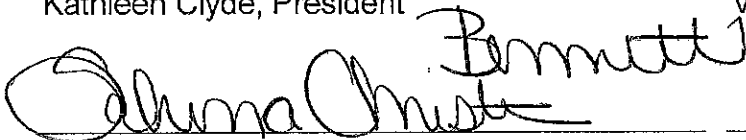
We do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct record of the Portage County Board of Commissioners' meeting.



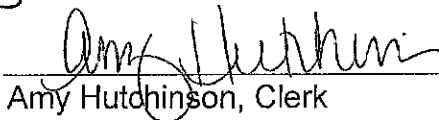
Kathleen Clyde, President



Vicki A. Kline, Vice President



Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Board Member



Amy Hutchinson, Clerk